



Gold King Mine Spill 08/07/2015

Region 8 reports that water continues to be released from the mine at a slower rate. Region 8 is in the process of reconstructing the retention pond to facilitate treating the effluent before release to receiving waters.

The EPA ASPECT aircraft reported that the leading edge of the plume was observed just inside the New Mexico border at 1515 MDT. ASPECT will continue to conduct overflights to track the movement of the plume.

To ensure pre-impact samples were collected, EPA Region 6 requested EPA Region 8 to collect samples in New Mexico on August 6, 2015. As a result, Region 8 collected two pre-impact samples the evening of August 6. The samples were taken on the Animas River, at the first accessible location south of the Colorado/New Mexico border and at the northern most drinking water intake for the city of Aztec.

NMED worked with some of their drinking water system operators in the towns of Aztec and Farmington, NM to collect water samples at their intakes. EPA took custody of the samples for laboratory analysis. NMED plans to have their water system operators take frequent pH readings near the intakes.

NMED is working with the effected water systems to determine current storage capacity and the potential for assisting with future water availability concerns in advance of the arrival of the leading edge of the plume.

The evening of August 6, 2015, Region 6 mobilized 2 START contractors from removal site in Grants, New Mexico, to Farmington, NM to have them on the ground to initiate sampling early morning August 7. These 2 START personnel will demobilize at end of the day August 7.

The morning of August 7, 2015, Region 6 deployed an OSC and 4 additional START from Dallas, to New Mexico. They are arrived in Farmington the afternoon of August 7. Two additional

START contractors will mobilize to Farmington on August 8. These personnel will form 2 Strike Teams who will continue sampling of the New Mexico reaches of the Animas River and the San Juan River just south of its confluence with the Animas. An additional Strike Team is being mobilized to assist with sampling activities.

There are a total of 8 drinking water intakes for 5 drinking water systems. One intake previously considered was discovered to be inactive. We plan to collect samples at each location daily. The Region 6 strategy is to collect water samples from the southernmost intake in Farmington to the northernmost intake in Aztec. We are analyzing for metals, mercury and taking field pH readings. This matches the sampling activities of Region 8 and Region 9.

Today Region 6 sampling teams collected samples from 4 water intake locations. These samples are being shipped to a TestAmerica laboratory for analysis. EPA Regions 6, 8 and 9 are coordinating on laboratory selection.

The proposed internal Region 6 reporting cycle is to have one set of bullets out at 7:00 pm that captures the activities for the day both in the field and coordination. The bullets will also mention the next day's planned activities. A second set of bullets can be generated at 1:00 pm to mention current status of the day's activities. This could also be done in a brief conference call if that is preferred.

Coordination discussions between the three Regions are addressing consistent; reporting, sampling and analytical methodology, data management; messaging.

Region 6 is coordinating water sample locations with NMED. Water Quality Division is gathering baseline and historical water quality data to aid decision making.

Region 9 is working with the Navajo Nation to sample the San Juan River in Navajo Country.

The State of New Mexico has issued a general advisory to all water users for the Animas River.

Region 6 will continue to coordinate with EPA regions 8 and 9, NMED and other federal agencies such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and USGS.